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SIXTH CONFERENCE ON PROBLEMS OF PARASITOLOGY,
HELD AT THE ZOOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, ACADEMY OF SCIENCES USSR

Acad Ye. N. Pavlovskiy

The Sixth Conference on Problems of Parasitology, held 5 - 9 April 1950 at the Zoological Institute, Academy of Sciences USSR, was attended by 170 representatives of 66 scientific and practical institutions in ten union republics and 28 cities. Two problems formed the basis for the conference: the natural centers and carriers of transmissible diseases of man and animals from the aspect of regional parasitology; and parasitic diseases of fish in connection with the latter's acclimatization and introduction into new regions. The first of these problems is the field in which the work of the author, of Academician K. I. Skryabin, and of Prof P. P. Perfil'yev merited the Stalin Prizes in 1949. The discussion and conclusions on this problem can be summarized as follows:

A number of papers on the problem were presented, and the conference particularly noted the widely developed work on the study of diseases such as tick-borne encephalitis, tularemia, tick-borne relapsing fever, tick-borne rickettsioses, and also various protozoal diseases of domestic animals in specific geographical regions of the USSR.

Because of progress achieved in the study of natural centers of tularemia and its fundamental epidemiological laws, it is possible to carry out measures for its elimination. The conference concluded that it was necessary to conduct many-sided investigations into new types of natural centers; and also to extend work on ascertaining the significance of shelter-belt planting from the standpoint of the epidemiology of tularemia, tick-borne encephalitis, tick-borne rickettsioses, and other infections, considering the effects of anticipated changes in steppe fauna. Concerning further study of the centers of tick-borne encephalitis, the conference recommended that attention be paid to more thorough investigation of the biology and ecology of tick carriers, and

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to clarification of the importance of breeding places of Ixodes ticks in animal burrows as possibly constituting natural infection centers of the disease. The distribution of "insular" sections with encephalitic centers and their connection with the principal forest belts of their areas should also receive further study by a number of methods. A special problem of considerable importance is the work started by the Division of Parasitology of the Zoological Institute, Academy of Sciences USSR, in establishing the northern limits of the distribution of Ixodes ticks in USSR territory, and also of the centers of their mass breeding.

The conference supported the Zoological Institute's request, addressed to all zoologists, veterinarians, hunters, and those workers engaged in regional study and animal husbandry, for the collection of data on the northern limits of the spread of Ixodes ticks, and the sending of specimens with proper labels to the institute. Epizootic collection of ticks is also essential.

It was considered necessary to continue the investigation of effective methods for individual protection of man and domestic animals from tick infestation and methods of controlling them in natural conditions on these animals. Since Ixodes ticks in the same territory may be a pest of both man and domestic animals, it was deemed necessary to extend their control as a single problem of medical, veterinary, economic, and biological importance which requires work from many angles both in the development of a system of measures for their control and in putting these measures into practice.

The work on the study of natural foci of tick-borne relapsing fever in Georgia brought to light new characteristics of Ornithodoros verrucosus as a carrier, and demonstrated the possibility of transference of the carrier into the agricultural sphere, thus placing it in direct contact with man. These circumstances make it necessary to develop measures to prevent the formation of new foci of tick-borne relapsing fever in man's vicinity and to control this carrier in its natural habitats.

Investigations on the extended starvation of the tick Ornithodoros and other species of the same genus have provided valuable data to explain the existence of natural foci of tick-borne relapsing fever over extremely long periods. The conference recommended extending this investigation into the study of the physiological processes forming the basis of extended starvation of these ticks.

The conference expressed interest in the necessity of standardizing the methods of making field counts of ticks which are carriers of transmissible diseases (Ixodes, Argas, and others). It also noted that a series of inaccuracies in the literature on species determination of Ixodes, which stemmed from the contradictions in foreign sources, have not been deleted from the summary by B. I. Pomerantsev, published in the series "Fauna of the USSR."

The conference noted the great experimental significance of the many-sided study of wild animals and their parasites, in connection with their epidemiological and epizootological importance, as conducted by the Zoological Institute, the Taizhik Affiliate of the Academy of Sciences USSR, the Division of Parasitology and Medical Zoology of the Institute of Epidemiology, Microbiology, and Infectious Diseases of the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR, the Biological Scientific Research Institute of Molotov University, the Tularemia Station at Leningrad, and others.

Great interest was expressed in new data on the biology of the human flea. The conference considered it necessary to continue these investigations in other regions of the Soviet Union and to study the biology of other parasites closely connected with the life and activity of man.

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The conference further noted the great significance of the regulation on measures for combating gadflies issued by the Council of Ministers and the ~~Tsk~~ VKP(b) on 26 May 1949. Considerable work on the subject has been done since then, and many notable results in combating gadflies infesting the skin of cattle have been achieved. Attention was drawn to related work done by Ye. N. Pavlovskiy and his group and also to treatment of cattle with oil solutions of DDT according to a new method suggested by D. V. Savel'yev. Various measures for aiding the study of problems connected with gadfly infestation of domestic and wild animals were planned.

According to discussions at the conference, relationships which have a bearing on infestations of horses with gadflies in the lowlands of Amu-Dar'ya, accompanied by mass infection with trypanosomiasis due to mass attacks by gadflies, have been studied from the viewpoint of interdependence of the local flora and fauna, and the problem of protecting the horses was tackled by rational use of pastures.

The necessity of developing more efficient insecticides and repellents against various blood-sucking and disease-carrying insects was also mentioned. Experimentation on more extensive use for the protection of animals of a variation of Ye. N. Pavlovskiy's insect-repellent netting was recommended.

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